European space policy: place and strategy of the Community

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The committee adopted the report by Konstantinos ALYSSANDRAKIS (EUL/NGL, GR) on the Commission communication. It welcomed the drafting of a coherent European strategy for space and endorsed the three lines of action proposed in the Commission document. The report stressed the need for further development of space technology, in particular launchers and vehicles, on the basis of "an openly declared ambition for European independence". This would require substantial and sustained public support for space development, in the form of massive research aid, completion of the internal market and public funding of infrastructure. The committee called for a detailed study of Europe's competitive situation in respect of space and urged the Member States and the Commission to impose strict reciprocity on the USA as regards non-tariff protection and indirect aid to the space industry, particularly where launchers were concerned. It also took the view that the ESA should in the longer term be brought within the EU, while retaining its autonomy. Another key point raised by the committee was that space activities should be intended only for peaceful purposes. It supported the development of a satellite system for global environment monitoring and wanted to see more international collaboration in space activities, especially with the Russian Federation, the USA, China and Japan. The EU could also provide affordable access to space for the less developed countries.